

# JAPANESE FARMERS IN CALIFORNIA

By COLONEL JOHN P. IRISH

*"We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness."—The Declaration of Independence.*

*"Observe good faith and justice toward all nations; cultivate peace and harmony with all; religion and morality enjoin this conduct, and can it be that good policy does not equally enjoin it?"—George Washington's Farewell Address.*

Copies of this pamphlet may be obtained from John P. Irish,  
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ON DECEMBER 17, 1919, THE JAPANESE GOVERNMENT ANNOUNCED THAT ON AND AFTER FEBRUARY 25, 1920, IT WILL STOP ISSUING PASSPORTS TO WOMEN WHOSE MARRIAGE TO JAPANESE RESIDENTS IN CONTINENTAL UNITED STATES HAS BEEN ARRANGED THROUGH EXCHANGE OF PHOTOGRAPHS. THIS VOLUNTARY MEASURE ADOPTED BY THE JAPANESE GOVERNMENT ONCE AGAIN PROVES ITS SOLICITUDE FOR THE MAINTENANCE AND PROMOTION OF FRIENDLY RELATIONS WITH THE UNITED STATES AND CALIFORNIA.



## JAPANESE FARMERS IN CALIFORNIA

(An address by Colonel John P. Irish at the 52nd Convention of California Fruit Growers and Farmers held at Chico, California, November 10 to 16, 1919.)

THE PRESENT vituperative discussion of the question of the Oriental people in California, goes deeply into the whole subject of productive labor on the land. When we treated our treaty with China as a scrap of paper and by the Geary Act excluded thirty thousand Chinese who were legally domiciled here, and by murdering and destroying the property of other Chinese, drove them out, there was created a shortage in farm labor, and this economic vacuum drew in the Japanese, who came protected by a solemn treaty between their government and ours.

The Japanese now here constitute a fraction of one per cent of our population. Against this minute element many of our people are being lashed into a fury of apprehension, hatred and rage. There may be left amongst us those who are capable of calm consideration, and to such I venture to address myself.

The present storm was started by Senator Phelan's statement that an American company in Los Angeles had sold to Japanese 800,000 acres of land on the Mexican side of the Imperial Valley. The American company promptly proved this to be false, and proved that it had sold no land there or elsewhere to Japanese. The Senator then shifted the story to such a sale to Japanese by the Mexican Government. That government promptly denied such sale and submitted proofs of the falsity of the charge. Not discouraged, the Senator shifted again to the charge that Japanese women in this state are having children and declared that the government ought to stop it.

A little retrospection ought to calm the temper of this discussion and confine it to the truth. When San Francisco was shaken to its foundations and levelled by fire, and thousands of its people had no food or shelter, their cry for help went out to the world. The only country that heard and heeded was Japan. That government immediately sent a quarter of a million in gold to the relief committee, of which Senator Phelan was a member. A few months later the San Francisco School Board kicked all Japanese children out of the public schools, and its secretary gave as a reason that the Japanese children did nothing but study in school and in the examinations took the prizes and promotions that the white children ought to have!

Soon after this an organized anti-Japanese movement began, headed by an ex-convict.

The Legislature began to take notice and passed an act ordering

the State Labor Commissioner to thoroughly investigate the Japanese in the state and make a report. To pay for this work the sum of \$10,000 was appropriated.

The commissioner took ample time in the investigation. He relied on the testimony of scores of white witnesses in every locality where Japanese were domiciled. He gave the name and address of each of these white witnesses. His report, based on their testimony, refuted every lie about the Japanese coined by the ex-convict and his followers. Now that report was a public document, paid for by the taxpayers' money. But the influence of the ex-convict with the State Government was able to prevent its publication, and the taxpayers who paid for it were not permitted to see it. In the foregoing is a record of absolute fact. Is it a record of which any decent citizen can be proud?

We have now entered upon another phase of the anti-Japanese question, and in this phase the same old lies, refuted by that report, are in use once more, and the politicians who eat their bread in the sweat of the taxpayer's face, are shouting them from the housetops.

Since that report was made what have the Japanese been doing? Nothing but working, and by their industry adding to the wealth of the state.

In our country the normal flux and change of affairs always following a war, has been displaced by abnormal conditions. The hands of men are raised against our government. Anarchists advocate destruction of our institutions. They destroy life and property by bombs. The I. W. W. teach murder and arson as commendable occupations. Organized labor under this radical leadership, strikes destructively. In our own state tons of food have rotted on the docks because the stevedores refuse to move it, and claim the right to mob and murder any who will move it. Seventy-five per cent of the local tonnage of this state is affected by water transportation, and all water-borne tonnage has been forbidden for months by a strike which threatens death to all who would take the strikers' place.

Are there any I. W. W.'s amongst the Japanese? No. Are there any Japanese anarchists? No. Are there any Japanese bomb throwers? No. Are there any Japanese mobs busy murdering men who want to work? No. Are there any Japanese groups teaching resistance to our laws and the destruction of our institutions? No. Then what are they doing? They are at work. "But," cries the alarmist, "they should not be allowed on the land."

Why not? The Japanese have had but little independent access to the good lands of California. They found the sand and colloidal



clays of Livingston cursed and barren as the fig tree of Bethany. On that infertile spot the Japanese wrought in privation and want for years, until they had charged the soil with humus and bacteria, and made it bear fruitful and profitable orchards and vineyards. Now white men, led by these Japanese pioneers, pay high prices for land that was worthless, and grapes purple in the sun and peaches blush on the trees, where all was a forbidding waste until Japanese skill, patience and courage transformed it.

The refractory hog wallow lands stretching along the east side of the San Joaquin Valley, were abhorred and shunned by the white man. But the Japanese Sakamoto, seeing that they were in the thermal belt, began their conquest for citrus orchards. He persisted. He won, and now vineyards and orchards cover the hated hog wallow land from Seville to Lemon Cove. And Sakamoto is called a "menace" to California!

These same experiences were repeated on the bad lands of the state.

We now produce a rice crop valued at \$30,000,000, on hard pan and goose lands that were not worth paying taxes on. But it was Ikuta, a Japanese, who believed those lands would raise rice, pioneered that industry and produced the first commercial crop of rice raised in the state.

The anti-Japanese agitator represents that people as parasites. The fact is that wherever the Japanese has put his hand to the pruning hook and plow he has developed nobler uses of the soil, and land values have rapidly risen.

The statement is made, and was recently published in a "Chronicle" editorial, that when Japanese begin to settle in a farming district that district is ruined for the occupation of whites, who get out of it as soon as they can. Of course that is a falsehood. Its refutation is seen at Livingston, where Japanese were the pioneers and now are outnumbered eight to one by white settlers who have come there since Japanese enterprise proved the value of the land.

In Sonoma County, near Santa Rosa, was a barren hillside so infertile that it hardly produced weeds. On its highest part was a spring. A Japanese secured a contract on it, dug out the spring, securing an increased flow, laboriously fertilized the sterile soil, and now gets \$800 per acre from it in strawberries. In the same county is an area of sterile hardpan land called "Starvation Flat." A Japanese has taken it, sunk a deep well and is slowly and laboriously conquering the rebellious soil, and soon that area will be a picture of fertility and prosperity, and anti-Japanese agitators will point to it, as they do to

the strawberry garden on the formerly repulsive hillside, as proof that the Japanese are usurping the best land in the state. The fact is that from the reclamation of the tule swamps, promoted by Mr. Shima, to nearly every acre owned by Japanese, they wrought upon the leanest and the poorest land in the state, which white men would not touch, and by toil and sacrifice made it as good as that which was naturally the best.

Now it is proposed to expel them, not for their vices but for their virtues, and every Japanese oppressed by brutal legislation and expelled can hold his head high erect in his own country and say, "I was excluded from California for my virtues, my industry, my skill and the benefit I was to the land and its production."

The Japanese with wives are all married according to our laws. The women are amiable, good wives, mothers and housekeepers. It is false that they work in the fields. Their children, admitted to our schools, will make good and useful Americans. But the cry is raised that though only about one per cent of our population, they will outbreed, outwork and outdo the other 99 per cent of white people. If this be true it proves a degeneracy of the whites which would be a just cause of alarm. The field is open. Economic law repeals all statutes. The way to combat the Japanese is not by lying about them and depriving them of the common, primitive rights of humanity, but excelling them in industry, in foresight and enterprise.

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## ARTICLES I AND II OF THE TREATY BETWEEN JAPAN AND THE UNITED STATES.

The subjects or citizens of the two High Contracting Parties shall have full liberty to enter, travel or reside in any part of the territories of the other Contracting Party, and shall enjoy full and perfect protection for their persons and property.

They shall have free access to the courts of justice in pursuit and defense of their rights; they shall be at liberty equally with native subjects or citizens to choose and employ lawyers, advocates and representatives to pursue and defend their rights before such courts, and in all other matters connected with the administration of justice they shall enjoy all the rights and privileges enjoyed by native subjects or citizens.

In whatever relates to rights of residence and travel; to the possession of goods and effects of any kind; to the succession to personal estate by will or otherwise, and the disposal of property of any sort and in any manner whatsoever, which they may lawfully



acquire, the subjects or citizens of each Contracting Party shall enjoy in the territories of the other the same privileges, liberties and rights, and shall be subject to no higher imposts or charges in these respects than native subjects or citizens, or subjects or citizens of the most favored nation. The subjects or citizens of each of the Contracting Parties shall enjoy in the territories of the other entire liberty of conscience, and, subject to the laws, ordinances and regulations, shall enjoy the right of private or public exercise of their worship, and also the right of burying their respective countrymen according to their religious customs, in such suitable and convenient places as may be established and maintained for that purpose.

They shall not be compelled, under any pretext whatsoever, to pay any charges or taxes other or higher than those that are, or may be, paid by native subjects or citizens, or subjects or citizens of the most favored nation.

The subjects or citizens of either of the Contracting Parties residing in the territories of the other shall be exempted from all compulsory military service whatsoever, whether in the army, navy, national guard or militia; from all contributions imposed in lieu of personal service, and from all forced loans or military exactions or contributions.

There shall be reciprocal freedom of commerce and navigation between the territories of the two High Contracting Parties.

The subjects or citizens of each of the Contracting Parties may trade in any part of the territories of the other by wholesale or retail in all kinds of produce, manufactures and merchandise of lawful commerce, either in person or by agents, singly or in partnerships with foreigners or native subjects or citizens; and they may there own or hire and occupy houses, manufactories, warehouses, shops and premises which may be necessary for them, and lease land for residential and commercial purposes, conforming themselves to the laws, police and customs regulations of the country like native subjects or citizens.

They shall have liberty freely to come with their ship and cargoes to all places, ports and rivers in the territories of the other, which are, or may be, opened to foreign commerce; and shall enjoy, respectively, the same treatment in matters of commerce and navigation as native subjects or citizens, or subjects or citizens of the most favored nation, without having to pay taxes, imposts or duties of whatever nature or under whatever denomination, levied in the name, or for the profit, of the government, public functionaries, private individuals, corporations or establishments of any kind, other or greater than those paid by native subjects or citizens, or subjects or citizens of the most favored nation.

CONSTITUTION OF THE UNITED STATES,  
ARTICLE VI, SECTION 2.

This Constitution, and the laws of the United States which shall be made in pursuance thereof, and all treaties made, or which shall be made, under the authority of the United States, shall be the supreme law of the land; and the judges in every state shall be bound thereby, anything in the Constitution or laws of any state to the contrary notwithstanding.

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FOURTEENTH AMENDMENT.

All persons born or naturalized in the United States and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States and of the state wherein they reside. No state shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States; nor shall any state deprive any person of life, liberty, or property without due process of law, nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws.